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The Magic Lantern Gazette

A Journal of Research

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This issue of the *Gazette* is entirely occupied by society member Gail Bundy's account of Harry C. Ostrander's travels in Egypt in the early 1900's, illustrated by Ostrander's own lantern slides. His slides have had a complicated history in Gail's family and with our society. Ostrander was her great uncle, and her family inherited several thousand of his slides when he died in 1957. An older relative recalled seeing his slide shows as a child. Many of the slides were donated to the Schenectady Museum in Schenectady, New York.

These slides, which included rare hand-colored views of China at the beginning of the 20th century, came to the attention of the late Gregg Millett, a society member, who exhibited some of them at the museum in cooperation with Dick Moore, then President of the society, in 2008. The slides also formed the basis of a major photographic exhibition that toured several Chinese cities in 2009 [see: Gregg Millett. 2008. Centennial vision, colorful China. *The Magic Lantern Gazette* 20 (2) (Summer 2008):15-16].

Street scene in Shanghai, China, early 20th century.

The slides of Egypt included in the current article were among those retained in the Bundy family and were scanned by Gail's brother, H. Robert Bundy. We are not able to print all of these in color in the *Gazette*, but this issue, along with the others from 2017, will soon be posted online at the San Diego State University Library website that hosts all back issues of the *Gazette:* http://library.sdsu.edu/scua/digital/resources/magic-lantern-pubs/gazette.

I highly recommend that readers view the article online to see the fine hand coloring that greatly enhances the beauty of the slides. Although Ostrander was a prolific lecturer, he is little known today. Nevertheless, the best of his slides are equal in artistic composition and coloring to those of the much more famous Burton Holmes, widely considered the best travel photographer of his era.

I am always looking for new material for the Gazette, so please consider submitting your research to our journal.

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Ancient Egypt: The Magic of the Nile

From the Writings of Harry C. Ostrander
Describing his Visit to Egypt in 1901

Illustrated with his Hand-Painted Glass Slides of
Photographs Taken in 1901, 1911, and 1917

Edited By
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Photographic Images Scanned by
H. Robert Bundy

Harry Clarke Ostrander (1869-1957) was a world traveler, photographer, writer, and lecturer, who was on the national lecture circuit from 1911 to the 1940s. "Ancient Egypt" recreates a travelogue, using his own words taken from six newspaper travel articles written after his first trip to Egypt in 1901. This narrative is illustrated with digital images of hand-colored lantern slides taken on three visits in 1901, 1911, and 1917. A brief biography of Ostrander appeared in: Gail Bundy. 2009. Harry C. Ostrander: the rediscovery of a lantern slide photographer. *The Magic Lantern Gazette* 21(4) (Winter 2009): 18-19.

Harry C. Ostrander with his camera.
Milwaukee Public Museum.

Egypt—A Land of Contrasts

On the borders of the great Sahara, where the endless sands first meet the living spirit of the Nile, and almost under the shadow of mighty Cheops, that old Egyptian monster known as the Sphinx lifts his hoary head and stares across the ages into an eternity to come . . . and he remains today as he has remained for over 6000 years, the mystery of mysteries, the universal symbol for the great unknown.

The Sphinx & Pyramid of Kephren

Older than the pyramids themselves, older than any of the gray, old temples, this gigantic, mysterious face gazes over towards the east, even as it has done since those dim, far days when Egypt herself was young. . . . For 4000 years it had been looking with tireless eyes toward the mystery of the sunrise when Joseph and

Mary and the infant Jesus fled for safety into this ancient land.

It has looked upon the rise and fall of many dynasties and many nations; Egyptians, Hittites and Persians, Greeks, Romans; Saracens; Mamelukes; Turks and Arabs, all in turn have risen to power in the valley of the Nile, and through it all the Sphinx has kept his secret.

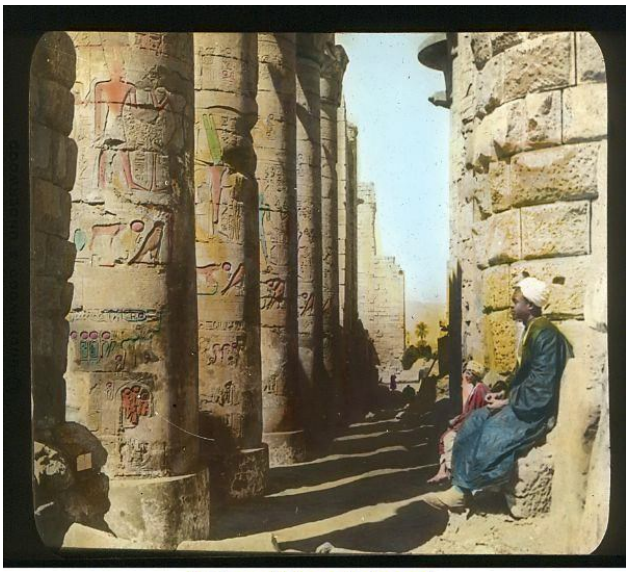
Today the same grave, questioning face looks down in apparent amazement upon that most harrowing, modern desecration of Oriental tradition, the American trolley car, and its hideous rows of towering poles, which come stalking across the plains from Cairo.

Road to the Pyramids - Egypt

If the great stone lips seem to shape themselves into a giant smile who, even in this matter-of-fact age, shall dare to wonder at it, or to question their right to do so?

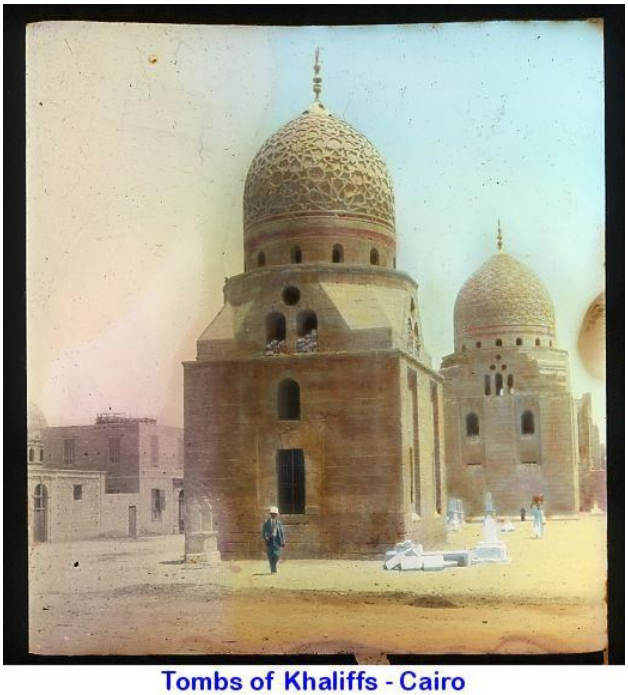
You'll have to hurry if you want to see Egypt, the real Egypt of the Pharaohs and of the Khalifs, for today the land of mystic charms and templed wonders in which the history of the world was cradled uncounted ages ago is undergoing a transformation so wonderful and so swift that another decade of the present feverish march of "progress" will surely spoil the splendid picture for all time.

In the mind of every thoughtful traveler passing any considerable time in this most fascinating land Egypt is almost unconsciously divided into two very distinct epochs: The Egypt of the Pharaonic era, whose glory is perpetuated in the ruins of the ancient temples . . .



Ruins at Karnak, Egypt

and that Medieval Egypt of the 'Arabian Nights,' whose Saracenic architecture finds its best exemplification in the Tombs of the Khalifs, the Citadel of Mohammed Ali, the mosques, minarets, marble palaces, glittering pinnacles and bastioned walls of Cairo, the Arab capital.



Tombs of Khaliffs - Cairo

Wherever we go, outside of Cairo, these two Egypts are ever side by side; and yet those two Egyptian nations are as far removed from one another as is Kamchatka from Patagonia. The great past casts it splendor over the pitifully crude rural life of modern Egypt, while the dead Egypt rises up out of its desert

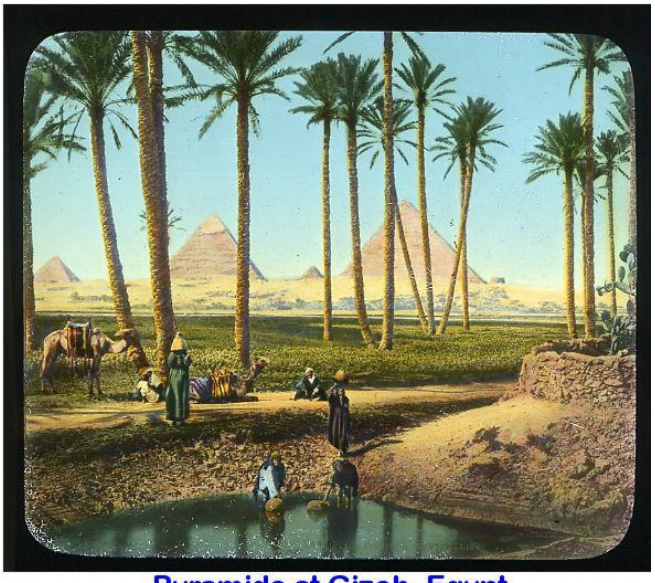
sepulcher to rebuke the tawdry tinsel of the Khedivial government, and lives again in the glory or its ruins. The past and the present stand ever in glaring contrast, side by side.

And yet, in many respects, this land of Egypt has not changed a particle in fifty centuries of epoch-making time. The 'shadoot' for raising the waters of the Nile; the primitive spindle and the potter's wheel; the manner of winnowing grain by throwing it into the air; and the plow, all exact counterparts as pictured on the walls of the ancient temples.

Egypt—A Land of Mighty Things

Throughout the Valley of the Nile may be seen hundreds of wonderful examples of the ability of the ancient Egyptians to transport stones of vast size and tremendous weight; and according to the ancient writers, they were able to do even greater things than these of which we have tangible evidence.

Most gigantic of all the works of these ancient builders are the Pyramids, about forty in number and stretching along the edge of the desert for twenty-five miles; beginning at Gizeh.



Pyramids at Gizeh, Egypt

The largest Pyramid is that of Cheops, at Gizeh, a veritable mountain of hewn stone, four hundred and eighty feet high and covering fourteen acres of grounds. As we climb to the summit of mighty Cheops, we wonder if it is physically possible to hold together until the summit is reached.

To gain a comprehensible idea of the immensity of these giant sepulchers we hire a party of Bedouins,

Doing Laundry near the Pyramids

Pyramid of Cheops and Camels

with camels, and journey out into the solitude of the Great Desert; but, though we travel for hours, until on every hand the yellow sands of the Sahara stretch away into seemingly infinity and the green palms, the Nile Valley and the minarets of distant Cairo have all long since faded from our sight, the great Trinity of the desert, Cheops, Kephren and Menkara, still raise their hoary heads above the limitless expanse of desert sands, seemingly quite undiminished in their great dimensions.

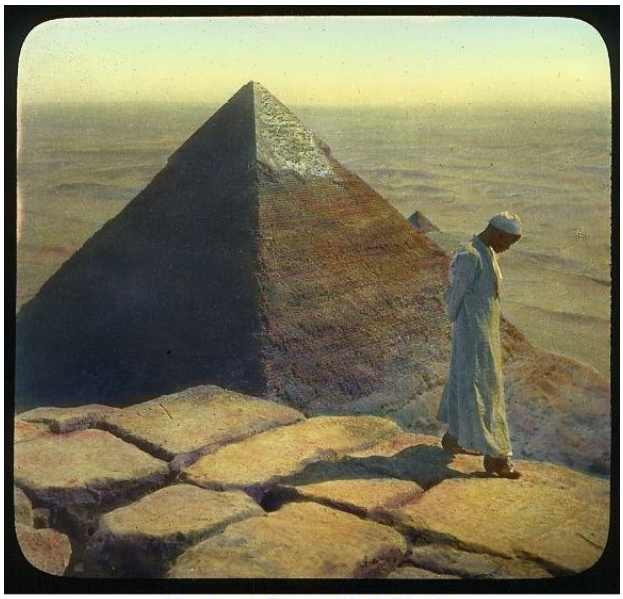
The world is dead. Even the jackals and yellow lizards have long since ceased to vary the monotony of this journey of silence. The heat is intense: A dazzling cloudless sky is above us: an ocean of yellow

From the Pyramid of Cheops

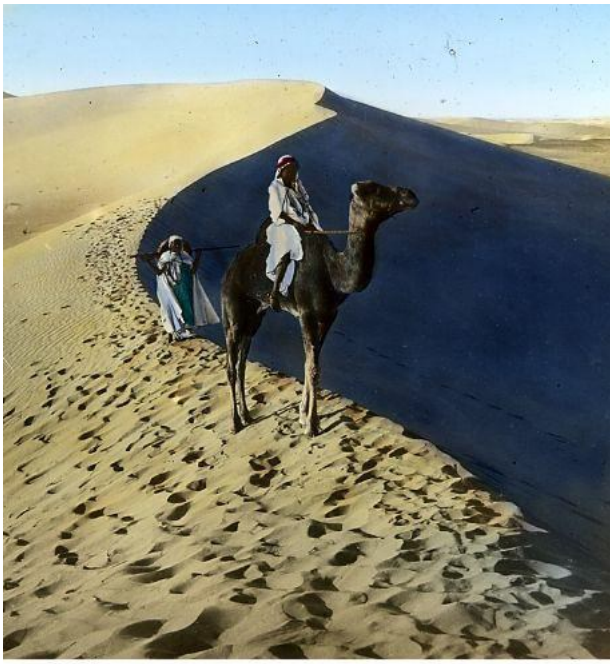
Pyramid of Kephren
(apparently photographed from nearby pyramid)

sand beneath us, into which the cushion-like feet of the camels sink deeply at every step; an intensity of silence hard to conceive by those who have not experienced it seems to pervade the universe and always those three great warders of the desert looking down upon us, as they have looked down upon the coming and going of forty centuries.

Oppressed by the silence, and the awful monotony we change our course and head our 'ships of the desert' across the mighty expanse of that petrified ocean,



Kephren Pyramid at Gizeh

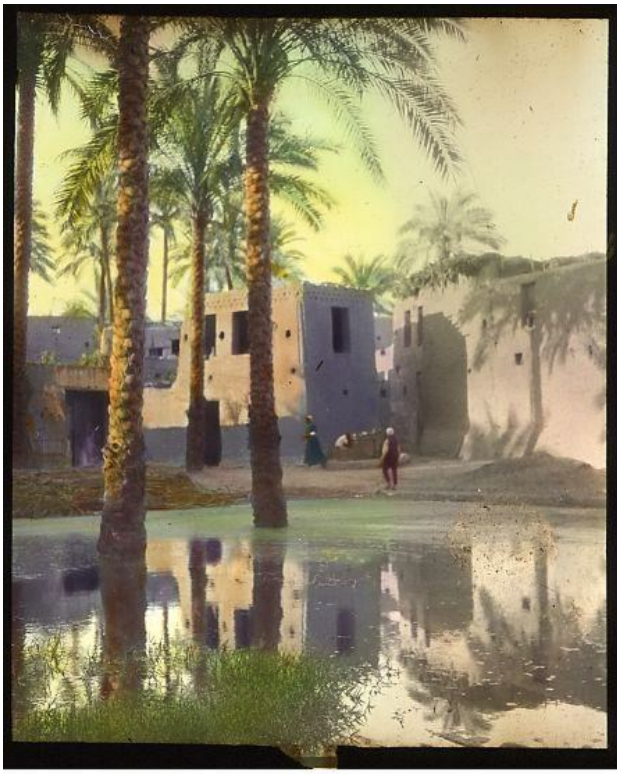


Sahara Desert - Man riding, Woman walking

with its huge billows of yellow sand, once more towards Gizeh and its cool greenness, under the glory of the waving palms, we realize, as never before, that the Nile is Egypt, the creator and the preserver of the Land!

By the Bedouin graveyard, at the edge of the desert, grows an ancient fig-tree with wide-spreading boughs. We stretch ourselves wearily beneath its welcome shade, while the camels kneel about us, and sending one of the Bedouins to the nearby Arab vil-

The Pyramids of Gizeh from across the sands.



El Marc - Egypt

lage for food we are soon enjoying the rather questionable delights of a meal in a desert camp. Flat wheaten cakes of unleavened bread, 'kababs' of mutton, oranges and dates in abundance and the curious Egyptian sweetmeat called 'hellowya,' washed down with long draughts of Nile water from our bottle-boy's earthen 'kulleh,' constitutes our menu; surrounded by a circle of interested and hungry-looking Bedouins,

Women at Gizeh, Egypt.

who fight the countless myriads of flies and fleas and occasionally, let we forget, punctuate our meal with a bland request for 'Bucksheesh, Howadji!'

Cairo—The Arab Capital

The same touch of the twentieth century is felt throughout the valley of the Nile. Thebes and Memphis, the mighty capitals of the ancient Egyptians gave way in time to Alexandria, the capital of the Greeks, whose glory waned in turn with the ascendency of the crescent, and Cairo, the city of the khalifs, became the Arab capital.

The Citadel - Cairo

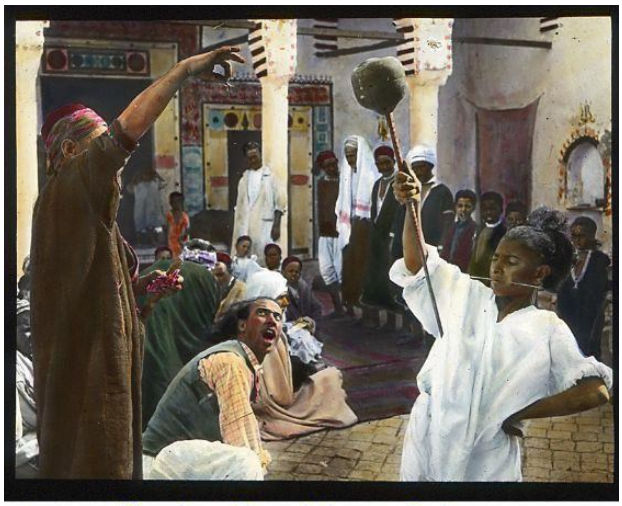
In the older and more charming parts of the Arab capital all these ancient glories are still in evidence, and few of the soiling touches of modern civilization have crept into the dim old streets and covered ways to lessen our joy, but on the Sharia Khamel Pasha, that great artery of traffic which separates the older Arab city from the modern Ismailla quarter, and even amid the crowds of the Sharia Mooski, which is a sort of Egyptian "Bowery," the march of modern progress is very much in evidence.

Moosky Quarter - Cairo

There is an indescribable charm which envelops all these dim, shadowy ways and gives to them an atmosphere of unreality, like a memory of an old, old picture or a whispered romance of the golden East, and we resent as a personal injury the introduction of the tasteless Frankish dress or any other innovation of the New Egypt.

Far from the sound of the street car gong, the bazaars are a dream of never-ending delight.... The bazaars of Cairo are, as they have been for nearly a thousand years, a vision of the "Arabian Nights," and wonderful pictures of Eastern life fill all these dim, old covered streets. Splendid Oriental draperies hang from the upper balconies, and all the enticing wares of Eastern lands are piled in a most intoxicating confusion in all the little booths. There is a constant delight to the artistic eye in the delicate tones and shades of the shawls and costumes worn by these people with such unconscious grace.

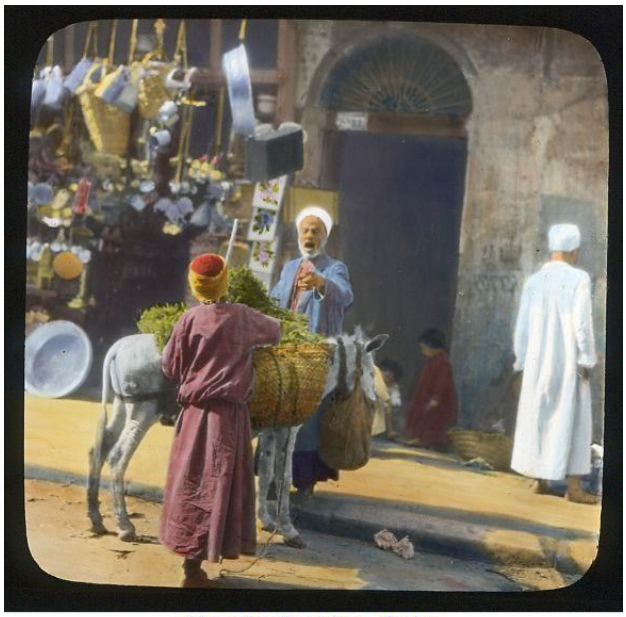
Cafe - Cairo, Egypt



Moslem Dervishes - Cairo

Cairo–Donkeys

Who that has ever known the joy of that first wild charge through the real "Streets of Cairo" on the hurricane deck of an Egyptian donkey with a blue-gowned donkey-boy yelling at his heels, can ever forget the supreme happiness of the experience or fail forever after to hold in grateful remembrance the omnipresent and indispensable little animal which figures so largely in all our happiest memories of Egypt? The Egyptian donkeys of today are the finest in the world, far surpassing in speed, endurance, beauty and spirit, their cousins of Europe and America. In Egypt fine donkeys command as high prices as horses or camels, and for general purposes are much more useful.



Moosky Quarter - Cairo

If you would study Oriental life in the narrow streets of the Arabian quarters of the city, and in the bazaars, the donkey is an indispensable companion. It is a strange experience to ride our donkeys through these miles of narrow, covered streets, known as "suks," or bazaars – cool, dark, fascinating, mysterious passage, full of lovely Oriental pictures, and redolent with the perfume of rose attar.

Going to Market in Egypt
(Keystone View Company)

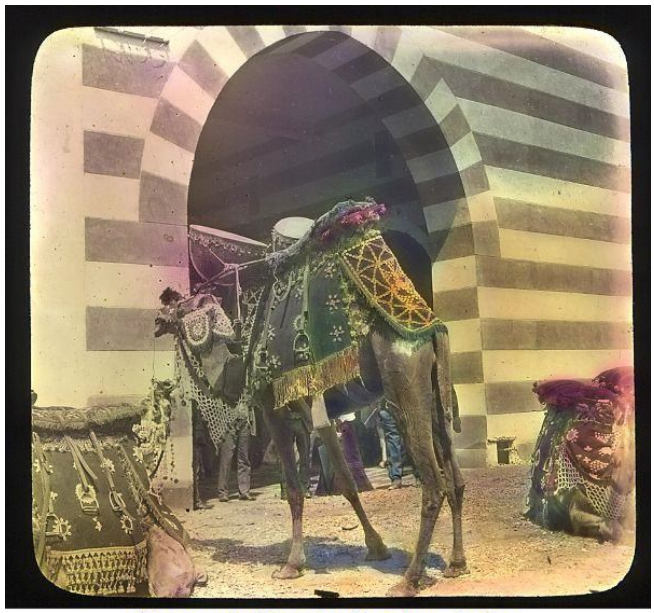
Through these intricate passages, crowded with humanity, the donkey seems to hold undisputed right of way; for, at the warning shout of the donkey-boy, everyone crowds aside to let us pass, and even in the silversmiths' bazaar numbers of beturbaned and dignified Orientals with their hands full of glittering gems and exquisite silver filigree, cut short their bargaining in the narrow ways and retreat ignominiously to the safety of their little shops as the infidel "Howadji" ride triumphantly through the bazaars on the backs of "Gladstone," "Teddy Roosevelt," or "Bedelia," as the case may be.

Egyptian Wood Turner - Cairo

Heralded by shrill cries of "Baleuk! Hasip! Riglak, Shelnalak!" from our donkey-boy we leave the picturesque multitudes of the world-famed "Sharia Mooski" behind us and pass through an ancient Arabian arch into an immense khan. Here, under one roof, are gathered all the beautiful wares of the Levant; the rugs of Smyrna, the carpets of Persia, silks and embroideries from China and Indian, attar of roses from Asia Minor, ivory from the Soudan, "kullehs" or earthen water-bottles from Keneh, red pottery form Assiout in Upper Egypt, beaten brassware and silver filigree from Damascus, yellow and red slippers from Tunis, and the thousand and one enticing things which find their way into all the bazaars of the Orient, and we spend many enchanting hours riding our donkeys through these crowded passages, hung with the choicest productions of Egyptian looms and permeated by the richest perfumes of Araby.

Arab Funeral - Cairo

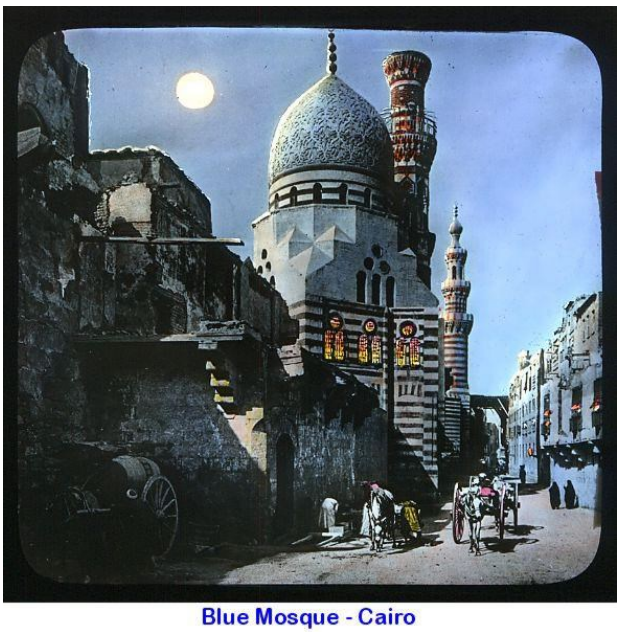
From the labyrinthine passages of the bazaars we pass out again into the strange, little, narrow streets, with ancient palaces and mosques towering above us on every side. Far aloft we see the turbaned muezzin circling his high pinnacle, and chanting toward the four corners of the city his soul stirring call to prayer.



Divorce in Moosky Quarter - Cairo

The picture is of a bygone age; the graceful, tapering minaret which points as a mighty finger heavenward the delicate lacework decorations of the swelling dome; the splendid Moorish arch above the great doors; the doors themselves, inlaid with silver and precious woods – all are the art of another age, of an age when all workmen were artists, and when all architecture was but the highest expression of art.

Mihrab Mosque Interior - Cairo



Blue Mosque - Cairo

But as we gaze enraptured upon the lovely picture, with delicious memories of our childish reveling in the old tales of the "Arabian Nights," we become aware of a discordant element which never could have entered into such a picture of Haroun Al-Rachid's time. The spirit of twentieth century civilization has invaded even this secluded and unspoiled corner of the Desert City, and to the very walls of the ancient mosque are attached the insulated supports carrying a line of hideous telegraph and telephone wires which go zigzagging through the picturesque old thoroughfare.

The Nile—Creator and Preserver

Hoping, in the silence of the desert to commune with the mighty spirits of this gray Nation's historic past, we voyage up the old Nile stream in a dahabeyah. This fertile strip of soil, which once ranked as the greatest nation of antiquity, is at places barely two miles wide and is seldom more than seven or eight miles in width.

Wikipedia, "Dahabeah on the Nile, 1891", silver print image in *A Month in Palestine and Syria, April 1891* (author unknown).

www. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dahabeah

We voyage slowly towards the Equator and the mysterious wilderness of the Soudan; gradually becoming aware of the surprising fact that we actually behold the entire land of Egypt from the deck of our dahabeyah; the red Arabian Mountains rising like walls on the eastern side, while the western plain is hemmed in by the more distant Libyan Mountains, the silent desert stretches away into infinity.

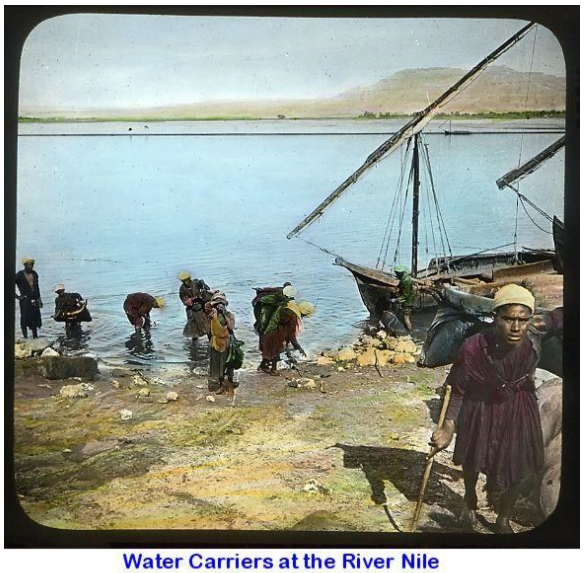
The Nile voyage is one delightful succession of beautiful pictures: the modern mud villages of the fellahin, groves of glorious date-palms and wide-spreading sycamore-figs, waving fields of sugar-cane, Coptic towns, Arabic tombs, Mohammedan mosques, picturesque groups of blue-gowned, chattering natives, countless 'shadoofs' and 'sakkiehs' for raising the waters of the Nile, and long lines of camels, silhouetted against the sky—these and a thousand other quaint and beautiful pictures of Oriental life pass in dreamy succession before our delighted eyes as we lounge luxuriously beneath the awnings of our staunch little Nile boat 'El Kahireh,' and listen to the singing of the Arab sailors as they go about their work. Feluccas, with their great booms and triangular sails, dot the placid bosom of the Nile and the mingling echoes from the distant villages, coming to us across the wide expanse of waters, is very musical.Memphis, Gizeh, Abydos, Edion, Dendereh, Thebes, Karnak, Luxor, what names to conjure by!

Egyptian Ox-driven Bucket Pump
(Keystone View Company)

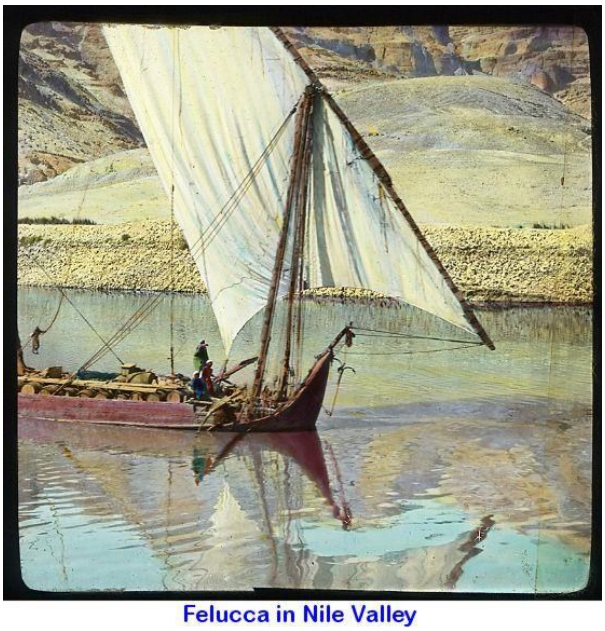
Keystone View Company was a major distributor of stereographic images and magic lantern slides from 1892 to 1963. (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Keystone_View_Company). Harry Ostrander sold photos and distribution rights to Keystone, and he purchased images to augment his travelogue presentations.

No pen can adequately paint the glorious spectacle of an Egyptian sunrise. As we journey along the silent river, wrapped in a shroud of the proverbial 'Egyptian darkness,' the dim, purple, shadowy out-

lines of the Libyan Mountains gradually assume more distinct proportions until at last the sun bursts over the darkened palm forests on the eastern horizon; and in an instate, the great verdureless range of sandstone cliffs is transformed into a chain of fairy mountains, glowing with the most gorgeous hues of pink, crimson and violet. The wheat and barley fields along the banks of the Nile soon catch the first rays of sunshine and the silent landscape quickly awakens to the routine of a new day. Before the rush-huts of the field-workers the glowing fires announce the preparation of the simple morning meal and on every hand is heard the monotonous creak and groan of the 'sakkieh' as the patient oxen turn the great wheels and raise the life-giving waters of the Nile to the level of the growing grain.



Water Carriers at the River Nile
(Keystone View Company)



Felucca in Nile Valley

Harry C. Ostrander, "Sakkieh," Sepia print, 1901

Payoum - Egypt
(Irrigation canal ?)

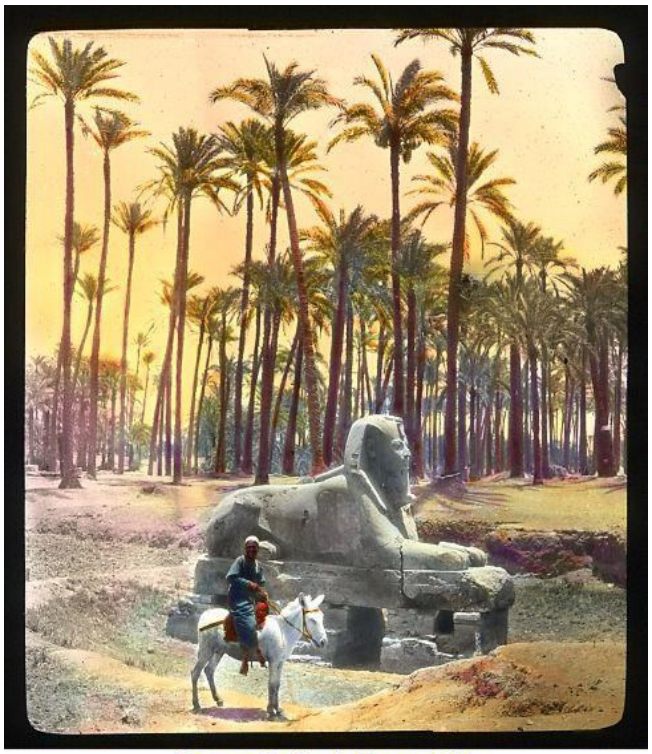
Memphis—Ancient Capital

The world has never seen, and perhaps may never see again, such awesome marvels of the builder's art,—such mighty shrines for a Nation's Deity, such stupendous sepulchers for a Nation's Kings,—as those whose ruined glories grace the desert sands of the ancient Land of Khem.

The great temples, which were the glory of ancient Egypt, are distributed along the whole valley of the Nile; and, carven upon the walls of at least three-fourths of them may be seen the cartoush of the famous builder-king, Rameses II.

Ramesis the Great was a mighty builder,—scores of wondrous temples still perpetuate his name and fame—through all the length of the Nile Valley, from Memphis to Aber Simbel, a distance of almost one thousand miles. He was no modest King, this Ramesis, for upon every column of every temple in the land is

deeply carven, not once, but many times, the name–Cartoush—of this builder-King; always accompanied by his many titles of state–'Ramesis, Beloved and Chosen of Ra; Son of the Sun; King of Upper and Lower Egypt; Lord of Both Lands.' The great Sesostris and his multitudes of peerless workmen have slept the sleep of the ages, but their wondrous temples remain today, after 3400 years, to amaze the architects and builders of this boastful and "progressive" twentieth century.



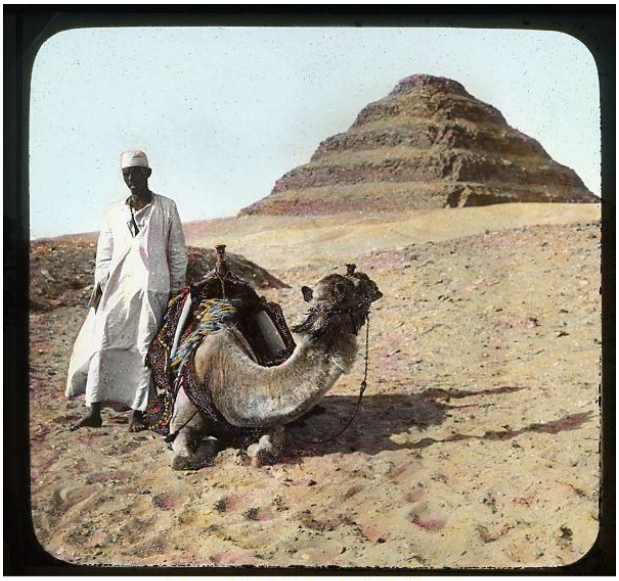
Ramesis II at Memphis

This plain of Memphis, uninteresting as it may seem to the casual observer, is full of wonders; not the least of which are the two giant statutes of Ramesis II, which once stood at the entrance pylons of the Great Temple of Memphis, now prostrate among the drifting sands, the sole visible remains of this once mighty city.

The largest of these colossal portrait statutes is forty-two feet in height and weighs not far form 400 tons. and was carved from one immense block of red granite brought five hundred and seventy miles from the quarries of Assuan, near the first cataract of the Nile.

Sakkara—The Oldest Pyramids

These are also the most ancient existing monuments of Egyptian antiquity; the Step Pyramids of Unas, near the site of ancient Memphis, dating back six thousand years.



Pyramid of Zozer at Sakkara

[At Sakkara, ancient life is] pictured on the walls of the ancient temples and in the superb Mastaba of the Nobleman Thy, at Sakkara, near Memphis, sculptured 4,500 years ago, while the Noble Thy was still serving his Pharaoh in his capacity of Royal Architect and Manager of the Pyramids. Few sculptures in all this land of wonderful sculpture can excel in beauty of finish and exquisite detail these dainty picture-carvings which still, after the lapse of forty-five centuries, so adequately tell to us the life-story of Thy and his numerous household; and surely none can bring us so closely in touch with that splendid civilization which in that dim, far-distant age filled with wondrous edifices this beautiful Valley of the old Nile stream.

Upon the walls of this splendid tomb we study with delight the carefully executed picture of one of Thy's husbandmen ploughing these very fields of Memphis 4,500 years ago and then, seeking the sunshine and the outer air, we behold, not a dozen yards beyond the outskirts of the Memphian Necropolis, the picture re-produced in living flesh – a modern Coptic fellah, ploughing the same fields, with the same plow and the same donkeys, in almost identically the same limited costume. It is difficult for reason to span the intervening ages of history-making time.

Scarcely less interesting are the Tombs of the Apis Bulls; an extensive system of subterranean rock-hewn chambers nearly a quarter of a mile long and containing twenty-four of the immense sarcophagi which once held the mummied bodies of the Apis

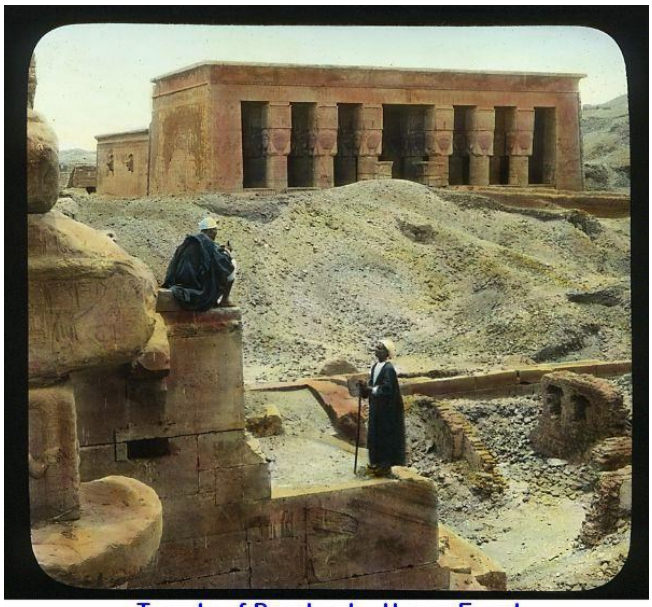
Bulls. Each of these monster coffins is carved from a solid block of polished red or black granite brought from a great distance and weighs no less than sixty-five tons.

Leaving behind us the wonders of Memphis and Sakkara, and the far away majesty of the great Trinity of Gizeh, we breast the current of the historic stream and voyage slowly.

Denderah—Temple of Hathor

We arrive at Kenah at early dawn, we are greeted by the usual crowd of excited, fighting, apparently frantic donkey-boys, who follow us into the city, howling and jabbering at our heels. After the necessary show of indifference upon our part we complete a bargain with one of these swarthy pirates by which we engage the services of himself and donkey for the day at ten plasters, and passing down through the crooked, dirty streets of this busy Coptic city, famous all over Egypt for its fine pottery, we cross the Nile on a felucca and donkey across the sands to the splendid ruined temple of the Goddess Hathor at Dendereh.

This temple, in itself dedicated to Hathor, the Egyptian Venus, or Aprhodite, Goddess of Love and Beauty, is in a fine state of preservation and is one of the finest in Egypt, but its most interesting feature distinguishing it from most of the ancient temples, is found in the curious labyrinth of subterraneous passages or crypts, built beneath the foundations of the massive temple walls.



Temple of Dendereh - Upper Egypt

It is a gruesome experience to explore these dark, silent chambers of mystery, extending two, and in some cases three stories under the ground and entered by small secret openings in the walls of the 'holy of holies,' formerly known only to the priests of the temple. The walls and ceilings of these crypts are entirely covered with the most exquisite carvings in bass-relief on the solid stone and yet they have never seen the light of day. They were the secret hiding-places of the temple treasure, and although these treasures of the ancient altars have long since vanished (carried away, some say by the Persian invader Cambyses), the robber Arabs of Upper Egypt still find a 'treasure-trove' within these empty vaults, for the exquisite cartoushes of the kings and the finer bits of stone-carving, cut from the walls by their vandal hands, find a ready sale among conscienceless American and European Howadji who are traveling this way. Consequently, in spite of the Government guard on duty at the temple, the crypts have frequently been despoiled and the heavy penalties awaiting detection seemingly possess no terrors for the temple-robbers.

We cautiously pick our way alone through one after another of these fourteen silent and gloomy crypts, our only light coming from a flickering bit of candle carried in our hand. In one of the deepest, most remote, of these dismal chambers, three stories beneath the foundations of the temple, there is a sudden flapping, fluttering, rushing sound ... as a number of immense bats sweep by us to the outer air, stirring up all the foul, dead smells of thirty centuries. With tingling nerves we press on our way, conscientiously determined to see all that is to be seen; but at the entrance to the most remote and deepest of all the crypts we come upon unmistakable evidences of recent occupation. One undecided step towards the rear of the crypt precipitates an adventure. There is the sound of footsteps retreating down the narrow passage. A vision of robber Bedouins flashes before our excited imagination, with the knowledge of the probable result of an encounter with desperate, lawless Children of the Desert confronted by detection and sure imprisonment. We suddenly decide that–'discretion the better part of valor is,' and dropping our precious inch of candle in our undignified haste we 'stand not upon the order or our going, but go at once,' leaving the Arabs undisputed masters of the crypts.

Ancient Glory—Modern Inventions

Seven thousand years of a wondrous ancient civilization which knew no equal in all the world have left a chain of titanic temples all the way from an-

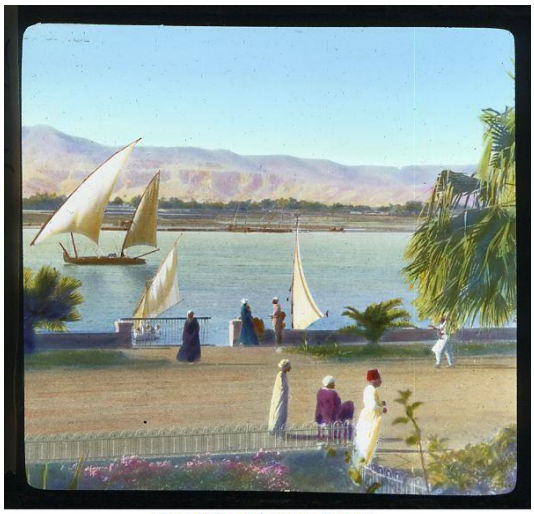
cient Heliopolis to the mysterious land of the Soudan, like a peerless string of mighty pearls a thousand miles in length, set in the glorious emerald of the valley of the Nile. But ruined temples and tombs alone remain to tell of the pristine glories of the ancient land of Khem. Gone are the mighty cities of this wondrous valley. Gone are the great caravans of stately camels with their swaying burdens of priceless Oriental freight.

The screech of the locomotive now echoes through the Nile Valley. Telegraph poles stalk in endless procession along the crest of the Libyan Mountains, ever in sight from our Nile boat as we journey from Cairo to the first cataract. Electric lights shine across the rippling waters of the historic stream as we anchor at night opposite some third-rate Arab town of Upper Egypt; and even in the tombs of the Kings, those stupendous sepulchers of Egypt's mighty Pharaohs of thirty centuries ago, have been strung with wire and are now lighted with electricity.

The advantage of a perfect light by which we are enabled successfully to study the hieroglyphic pictures, which cover the thousands of square feet of sculptured stone in these wondrous tombs of course cannot be denied, yet the effect of modern electric light wires and bulbs far in the depth of mighty rock-hewn tombs, where the mummied Pharaohs of ancient Khem were scaled from the sight of men long before the time of the Biblical Moses must seem incongruous, to say the least.

Thebes—Luxor and Karnak

At Thebes, imperial mistress of the world under the Ramesiside Kings, our 'El Kahireh' anchors almost beneath the shadows of that colossal colonnade which is the chief glory of the Temple of Luxor; and here we spend one supremely delightful week, living in utmost comfort upon the dahabeyah and rambling with our dragoman day after day among the most stupendous ruins in the world's greatest treasure-land of ancient history.



The Nile at Luxor, Egypt

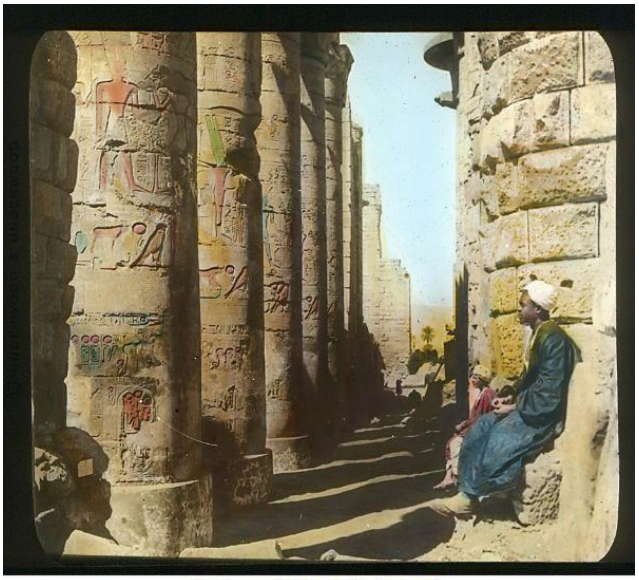
Day by day we study the inexhaustible glories of Karnak and Luxor, and penetrate to the farthest confines of the great Necropolis of Thebes. Thebes was the peerless 'city of a hundred gates' described by the Greek poet Homer and was a fit city to be the capital of that gray land where history was born.

Kriosphynxes at Karnak

Temple of Amenhotep - Luxor, Egypt

The Theban Temple of Ammon, now known as Karnak, was the great national sanctuary and the seat of priestly learning. Under Ramesis II, identified by Biblical students as the Pharaoh of the Oppression, Thebes was mistress of the world and carried her victorious banners into Asia and Europe. The stories of these foreign victories are most vividly portrayed in stone-carved pictures upon the temple walls.

The great Hall of Columns at Karnak has been for nearly forty centuries the wonder of all mankind; its mighty columns, sixty feet in circumference, and towering nearly a hundred feet in the air, bear huge roof beams of solid stone twenty-five and thirty feet long.

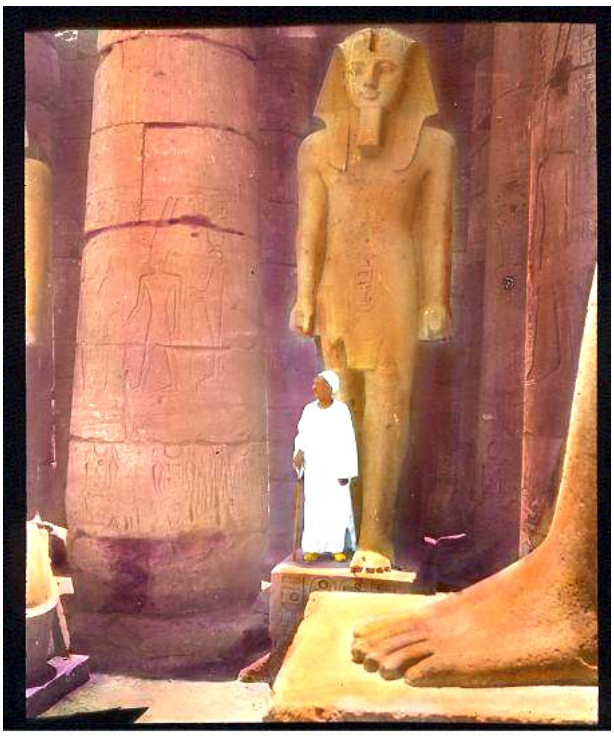


Ruins at Karnak, Egypt

The world-famed quarry of Assouan, at the First Cataract of the Nile, was the birthplace of all the Egyptian temples; and the transportation of some of the ponderous stones used in their construction may be reckoned among the wonders of the ancient world.

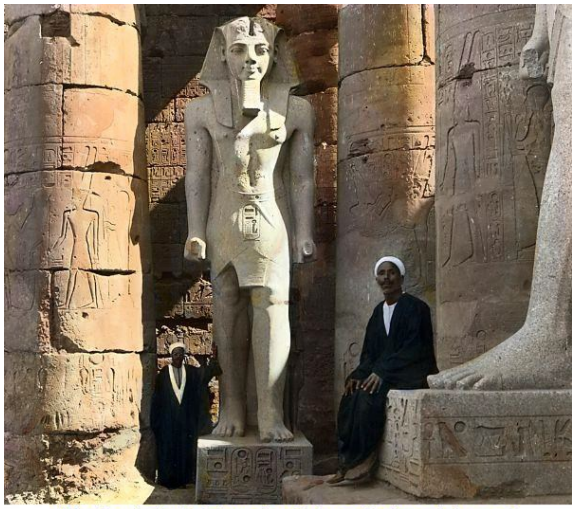
Thebes, 188 miles north of the [Assouan] cataract, is full of granite marvels from these famous quarries, chief of which may be mentioned the colossal statue of Rameses II in the Memnonium, which weighed nearly 1000 tones, and the two great obelisks of Queen Hatasu, in the Temple of Ammon at Karnak, each one of which weighs over 1,000,000 pounds.

Most gigantic of all the statues of Upper Egypt are the two sitting Colossi of Amenhotep III, at Western Thebes. Each statue was originally carved from a solid block of stone sixty-four feet high and weighing over one thousand tons, and made from a variety of granite not known within several days' journey of Thebes.



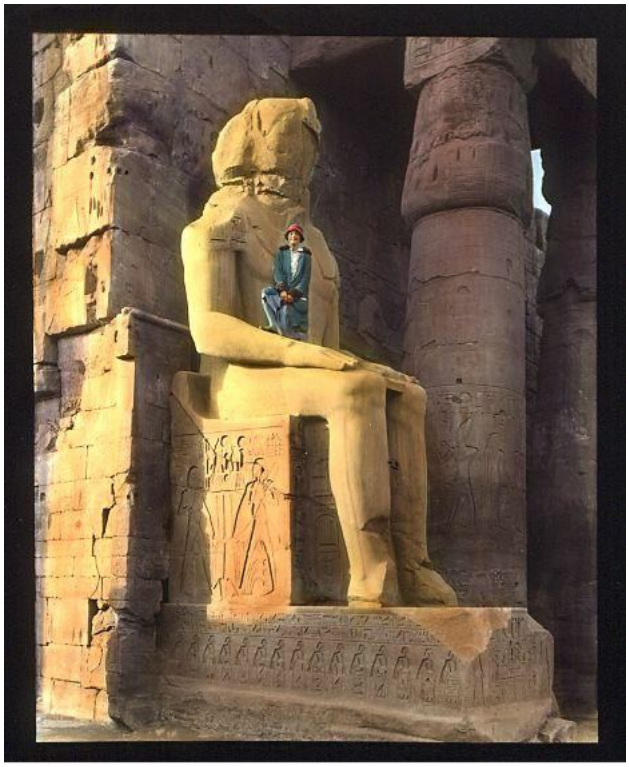
Luxor - Temple of Amenhotep III
(Made by Joseph Hawkes, NYC)

Joseph Hawkes was a photographer who was one of Harry Ostrander's colorists, a person hired to hand-color lantern slides. Hawkes also worked with William Henry Goodyear, Curator of Fine Arts at the Brooklyn Museum, in assembling a collection of lantern slides of Ancient Egypt and other archaeological sites. Digitzed images can be seen at: https://www.brooklynmuseum.org/opencollection/archives/lantern_slide_collection/copy/history



Missing Label - Temple of Amenhotep at Luxor?

(Ramses II at Luxor)



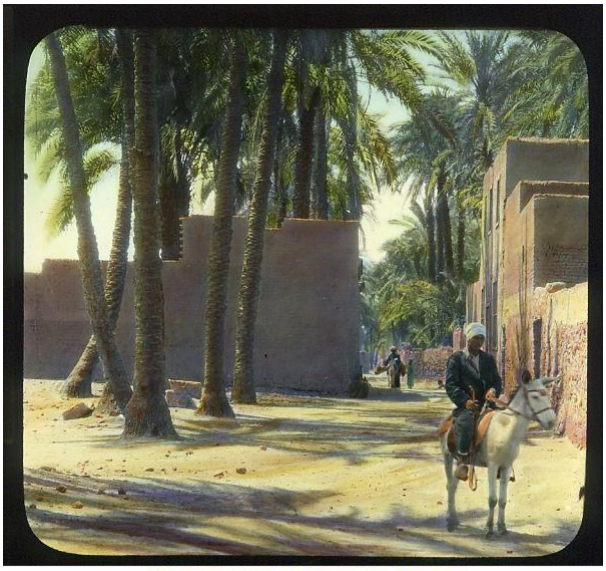
Luxor - Temple of Amenhotep

What thoughtful Howadji from the Western World could stand among the mighty columns of Luxor, under the glory of an Egyptian moon, and fail to be moved by the feeling of awe and amazed wonder which sweeps with overwhelming force upon him? The supreme effect of that majestic temple, with its towering columns and glorious courts bathed in the silvery moon-light or wrapped in the purple shadows, is a picture of surpassing loveliness, destined to linger always among our fondest recollections as long as memory shall last. And where is that satiated world-wanderer so completely devoid of artistic sense that he could climb the great Pylons of Karnak and gaze upon the majestic sculptures and mighty Columnades of the world's greatest ruin, bathed in the glowing splendor of the African sun, without bowing in very reverence before that scene of matchless beauty?

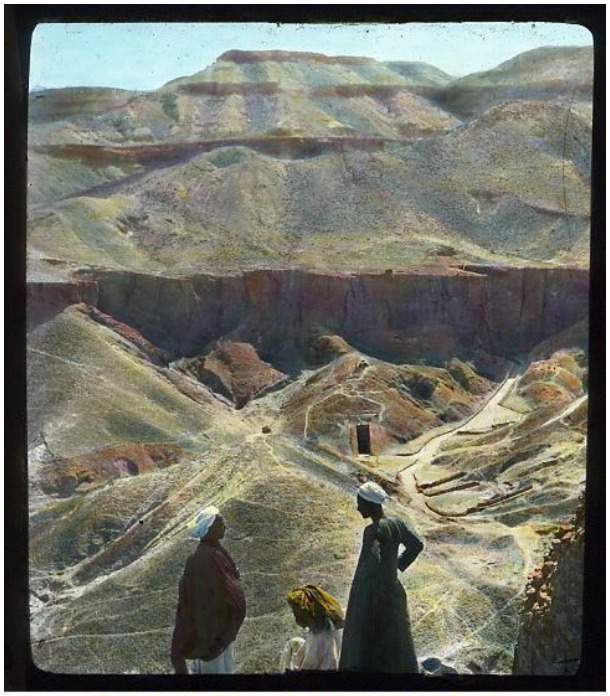
Thebes–Valley of the Kings

We find the banks of the historic stream lined with a crowed of apparently frantic donkey-boys and an indiscriminate collection of donkeys – good, bad, and indifferent – white donkeys, drab donkeys, mouse-colored donkeys and black donkeys, and, if we would believe their owners, donkeys of as many nationalities. The donkeys and donkey-boys of Upper Egypt are famous the world over, and the ethnographical instinct of the Egyptian donkey-boy at large is something to marvel at. Almost invariably the unsuspecting tourist is greeted by these wily diplomats in his own mother tongue, and they seldom fail to guess one's nationality aright.

Donkeying across the plains of western Thebes and through the dusty and suffocating defiles of the Valley of Bab el Molook we explore the great royal burying place of ancient Khem—the tombs of the Egyptian Kings.

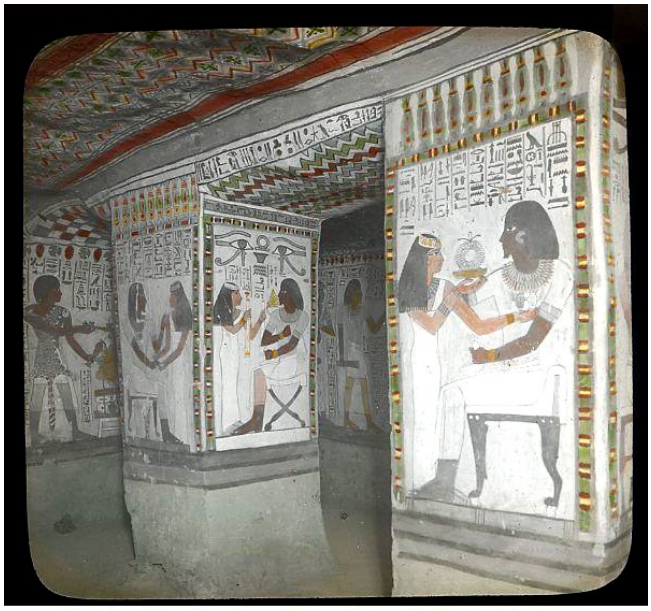


Mud Houses at Karnak, Egypt



Thebes - Valley of Bab el Molook

After the pyramids these are probably the most remarkable sepulchral structures in the work, being immense chambers from three hundred to four hundred feet long, cut into the solid rock of the mountains and decorated with a lavishness of sculpture and painted ornament hard to conceive. From one to another of these mighty sepulchers we pass, groping by the dim light of candles carried in our hands, down steep stone stairways, smoothly worn by the feet of centuries, slippery and intensely dark; bewildered by the beauty and intricacy of the carvings and paintings which cover every inch of available space upon the walls and ceilings; crushed, almost, by the overwhelming sense of the might of that ancient nation which could build such sepulchers for its dead Kings. We can only wonder at the multitudes of artists and artisans whose lives must have been spent [in the] mountain depths. A dozen of the great tombs have revealed their beauties to the light or our torches and candles.

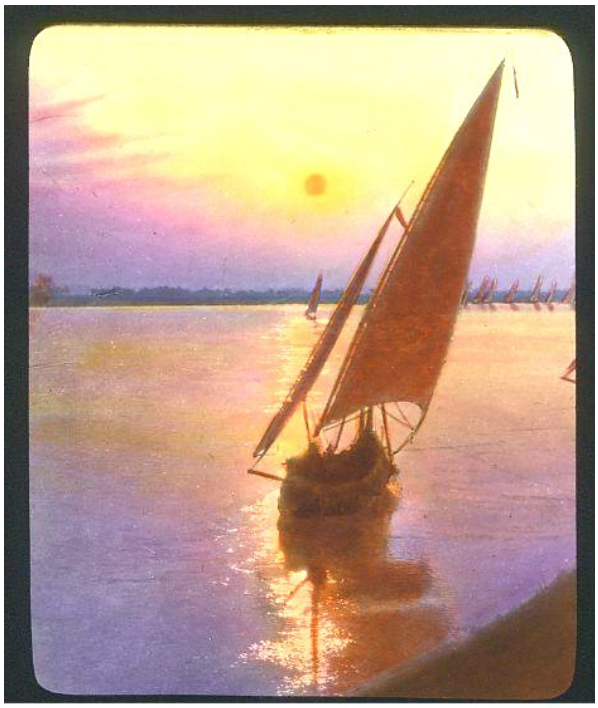


Painted Tomb Chamber of Sen Nefer at Thebes

We emerge into the dazzling light of the Egyptian midday; tired, dusty, surfeited with the wonders of ancient Egypt and well-nigh famished; with a good five miles of desert sand still between us and the 'Kahireh's' dining table. But Mohammed to the rescue! Our dragoman's thoughtfulness has provided a welcome feast, which has come to us across the desert on a camel's back. The hamper is quickly emptied and the festive cloth is spread on a great rock in one of the splendid tombs of the Ramesisides. Think of it! A picnic in the tomb of a Pharaoh who ruled over this mighty land three thousand and four hundred years ago.

Resuming our donkeys we climb from the Valley of Bab-el-Melook to the rocky heights of the Libyan Mountains, from the summit of which we have a most striking view. On the one side the beautiful Valley of the Nile, with its luxuriant vegetation, on the other the dismal mountains and the sandy wastes of the Sahara stretching away to the horizon –a scene of supreme desolation.

The coloring of the Arabian and Libyan Mountains under the last rays of the setting sun is something wonderful to behold, the bare sandstone cliffs taking upon themselves their most delicate hues of terra cotta and pink, tipped with crimson, with shadows of exquisite violet and purple, while the glancing rays of yellow light, across the rich verdure of the Nile Valley, contrasting most beautifully with the rich dark green of the feathery date-palms and the peculiarly soft and harmonious coloring above the minarets of distant Luxor.

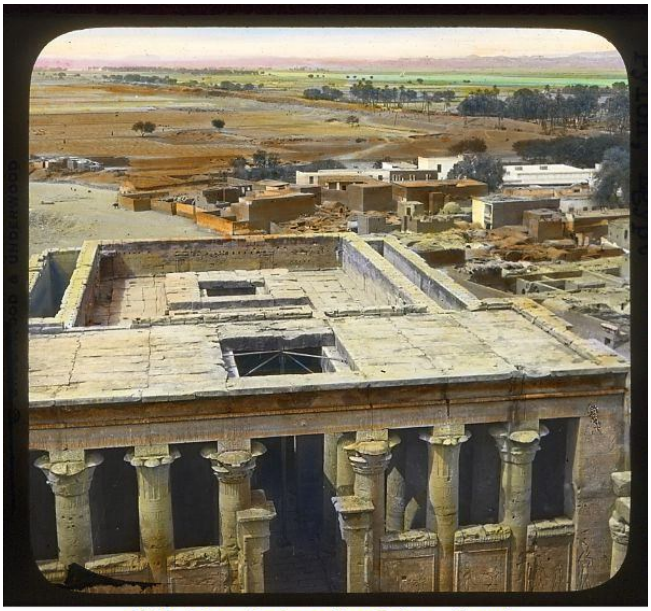


Sunset on the Nile

The last warm light, fading gradually into darkness over the kingly ruins of Karnak, leaves us under the glory of a star-gemmed Egyptian sky and enthralls our senses with an overwhelming awe of that marvelous civilization of a bygone age, whose very ruins are still, after forty centuries of time, the grandest in the world.

Edfron–Temple of Horus

From Thebes, the Silent City of the Dead, we voyage on to Esneh, where the mud huts of the modern towns are built upon the very roof of the splendid Temple of Hathor, which we explore at night by the light of flaring torches; and then, on to Edfon, where we feast our eyes upon the magnificent Temple of Horus, the Egyptian Apollo. This is the most perfect ancient temple in all Egypt and in fact in the entire world. It would need but a fire upon these deserted altars and a procession of white robed Egyptian priests passing from the grand court into the 'holy of holies' to complete the picture and to conjure up all the mighty past; peopling this splendid edifice with those living Egyptians of that dim, far age who once dwelt in this historic Valley of the Nile.



Edfu Temple from the Pylon, Egypt

Kom Oubos–Temple of Sobek

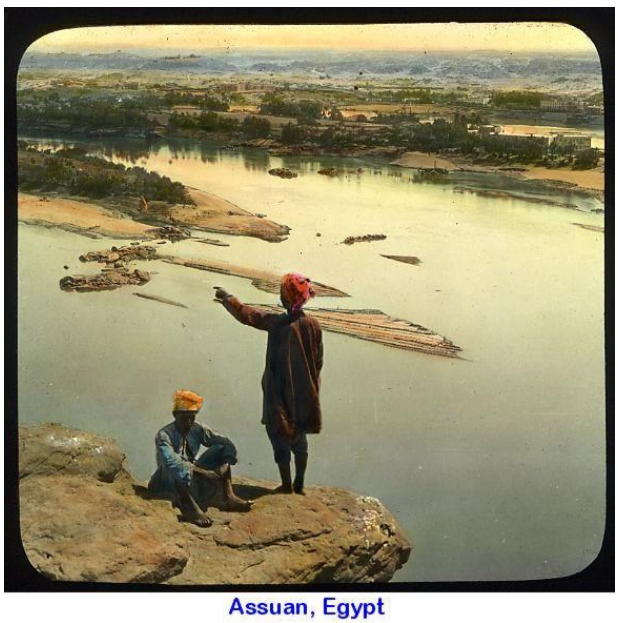
Regretfully leaving behind us the splendors of Edfon and passing on either shore a constantly changing panorama of lovely vistas among the palms, and sandstone mountain ranges glowing in colors which no artist would have the audacity to transfer to canvass, we come to Kom Oubos, whose beautiful ruined temple deserves our closest attention.

Assouan—Stone Quarry for Temples

And then on to Assouan and the first cataract of the Nile. The world-famed quarry of Assouan, at the First Cataract of the Nile, was the birthplace of all the Egyptian temples; and the transportation of some of

Kom Ombos (or something like that)

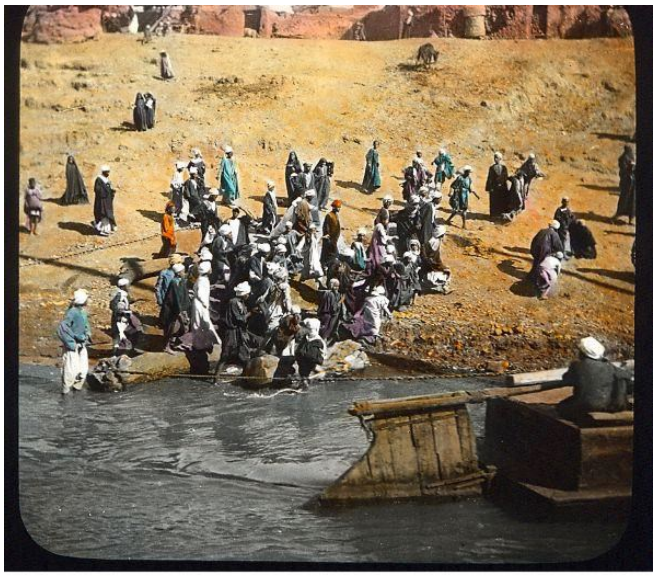
of the ponderous stones used in their construction may be reckoned among the wonders of the ancient world. Single obelisks and monolithic statues weighing upward of 1000 tons were taken from this great quarry and transported hundreds of miles down the Nile to grace the temples of Lower Egypt, Thebes, Edfou, Dendereh, Abydos, Memphis and Heliopolis – all owed their sculptured wonders to the great quarries of Assouan.



Assuan, Egypt

At the First Cataract of the Nile the highest engineering skill of the twentieth century has accomplished a work so stupendous as to deserve a high place among the wonders of the modern world; but the great barrage of Assouan, although a wonderful

example of modern engineering and destined to reclaim millions of fertile acres from the desert sands, is yet a potent factor in the sad but sure transformation of the Nile Valley.



Assuan - Upper Egypt

Isle of Phylae—Temple of Isis

From the quarries we travel on camel back for miles through wastes of drifting sand, passing through a lonely Arab graveyard in the desert, and at last, at the Nubian village of Shellal, we come again to the living shores of Father Nile. A felucca ferries us across its gently rippling waters to that green spot of loveliness which was, and still is, the crowning glory of the Land of Khem, the sacred island of Philae, where the great God Osiris was reputed to have found his sepulchre.

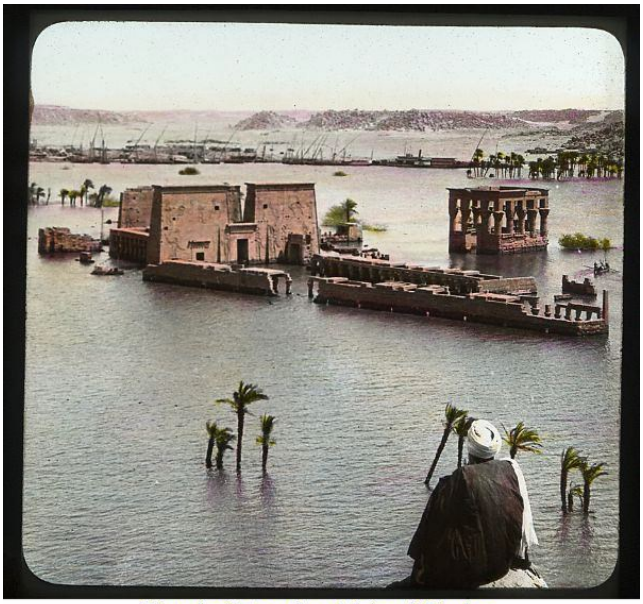
Ruined Temples on the Island of Philae.

'By the ghost of Him who sleeps in Philae,' was the ancient Egyptians most sacred oath, and it serves to show the intensely devout character of that eminently religious nation. And truly, Philae is a fit place for any God to sleep. An enchanted island, set like a gem among the sparkling waters of the Upper Nile, with the roar of the first cataract chanting its eternal requiem; wreathed in the grateful shade of the stately palms, and with the eternal solitude of the Nubian Desert creeping hungrily to the very waters edge; lovely Philae, with her peerless Kiosk and her ruined, but still glorious, Temple of Isis, where last in all this Upper Kingdom the altar fires wafted their incense upward.

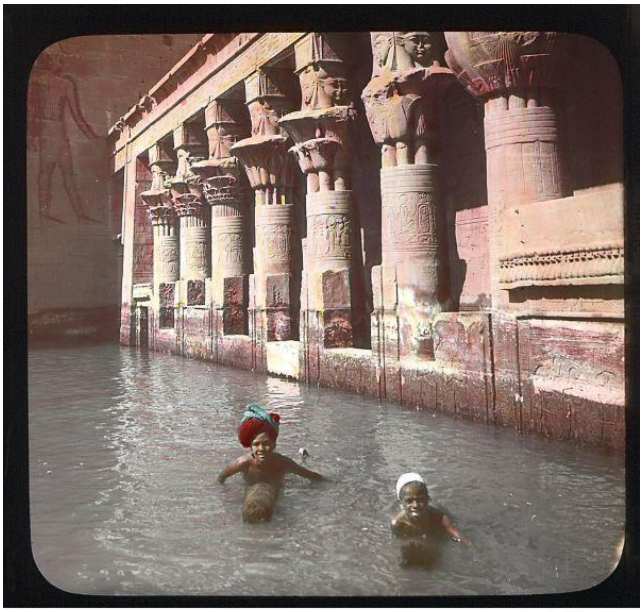
Isle of Phylae Ruins on the Nile

The templed Isle of Philae, loveliest gem of all this historic land, is doomed to destruction by the increased overflow at the time of the annual inundation, the water rising, since the completion of the great dam, almost to the top of the superb temple of Isis and that loveliest of Egyptian shrines known as "Pharaoh's Bed."

During the period of the inundation one may now paddle about in a boat among the carved lotus capitals of that splendid colonnade where last in all this land of Khem the gods of ancient Egypt were revered. Below the cataract a great tourist hotel has been built and at night the electric lights from its windows shine across the waters of the ancient stream, even to the historic Isle of Elephantine.



Flooded Temple of Isis at Phylae



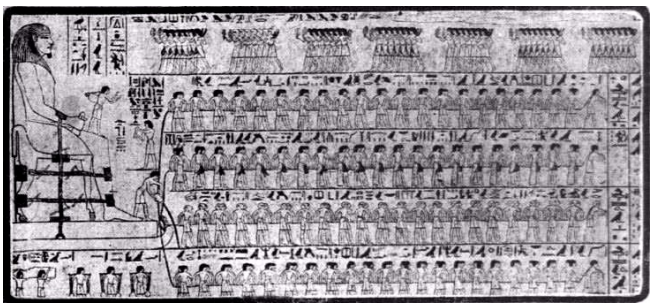
Swimming in Ruins at Phylae - Jan. 15, 1917

The parting view of Philae is a picture of surpassing loveliness; a fit memory of that scene of ancient splendors with which to bid the Land of the Pharaohs a last farewell. The sun has set, like a great ball of fire, behind the red Libyan hills, and the Egyptian shadows have quickly enwrapped us like a shroud. The Queen of Night lifts her glorious orb behind the palm-groves of Nubian Shellal, casting long bars of silvery light across the towering pylons of Isla; the sounds of the night mingle with the distant anthem of the cataract; the 'bul-bul' bird sings to his mate, among the palms; and over all the moon's soft radiance is shed, lending to the splendid ruins of this island paradise an ineffable charm; enthralling our souls with the matchless splendors enwrapped in the glory of an African night; truly –'a thing of beauty and a joy forever. Its loveliness increases, it will never Pass into Nothingness.'

Nile Sunset

How Did Ancients Build?

The great question of all ages has been: How did they do it? A quaint hieroglyphic picture which has been discovered on the walls of a tomb at El Burcheh, dating from the reign of Usertsen II in the twelfth dynasty, seems to shed considerable light on the subject, and would seem to prove that the whole secret of the ancient Egyptians consisted of their unlimited command of individual labor. In other words, instead of by the use of an unknown power, all of these marvelous works have been accomplished solely by a vast aggregation of brute strength.



Harry C. Ostrander, "How did the Ancients Move Blocks of Stones as Large as Houses," *The San Francisco Sunday Call*, January 20, 1907, p. 8.

In the hieroglyphic picture referred to, the method of moving these huge stones is most admirably portrayed. The picture is carven in the conventional style of ancient Egypt, and shows a colossal seated figure of granite, about twenty-six feet high, and probably weighing about five hundred tons, secured by tightly twisted ropes to a wooden sledge, which is drawn by a great throng of almost naked slaves, who are harnessed two-by-two. The engineer in charge of the work is seen standing upon the knees of the statue, marking time to the measured cadence of a song, very much as the Egyptians of today are accustomed to sing as they go about their work.

Upon the toes of the colossus, at the front of the sledge, stands a man who pours oil from a jar upon the causeway in order to lubricate the passage of the sledge and also to prevent fire from friction. Other slaves remove the wooden sections of the causeway after the colossus has passed over and place them again before the sledge.

All of which would seem to prove that the marvels of quarrying and building performed by the ancient Egyptians ... were not accomplished through the instrumentality of some tremendous unknown force, but were the result of forced labor and cost unnumbered thousands and tens of thousands of wretched human lives, the lives of slaves taken in battle, and of miserable subjects dragged from their families to labor without pay for the future glory of their Pharaoh or King.

And so, as the blood from the guillotine besmeared the fame of the newborn French republic and dimmed its glory for all time, we come to look upon these ancient marvels of architecture with less of admiration as we begin to understand the full measure of human suffering which was their price; and in the New Egypt of the twentieth century, with its schools for the common people and the bettered condition of its teeming millions, its magic transformation of the desert into fertile acres by the great Nile dam, and in its steady trend toward the better things of the age, we find a broader interest and a deeper satisfaction than in those mighty monuments of human woe which fill the wondrous Valley of the Nile.

Travel Writing and Photo Images of Egypt — Resources

Waterloo, New York Library & Historical Society

Harrie C. Ostrander, "Ancient Egypt: The Land of the Pharoahs," *Waterloo Observer and Democrat*, Friday, June 3, 1904, Vol. 78, No. 3, p.1.

Harrie C. Ostrander, "Ancient Egypt—From Memphis to Philae: The Nile Voyage of a Howadji," *Waterloo Observer and Democrat*, Friday, June 10, 1904, Vol. 78, No. 4, p.1.

Harrie C. Ostrander, "Ancient Egypt—From Memphis to Philae: The Nile Voyage of a Howadji," *Waterloo Observer and Democrat*, Friday, June 17, 1904, Vol. 78, No. 5, p.1.

Library of Congress, *Chronicling America.*

H.C. Ostrander, "How Modern Inventions are Destroying the Ancient Glory of Egypt," *The San Francisco Sunday Call*, October 14, 1905, p. 16.

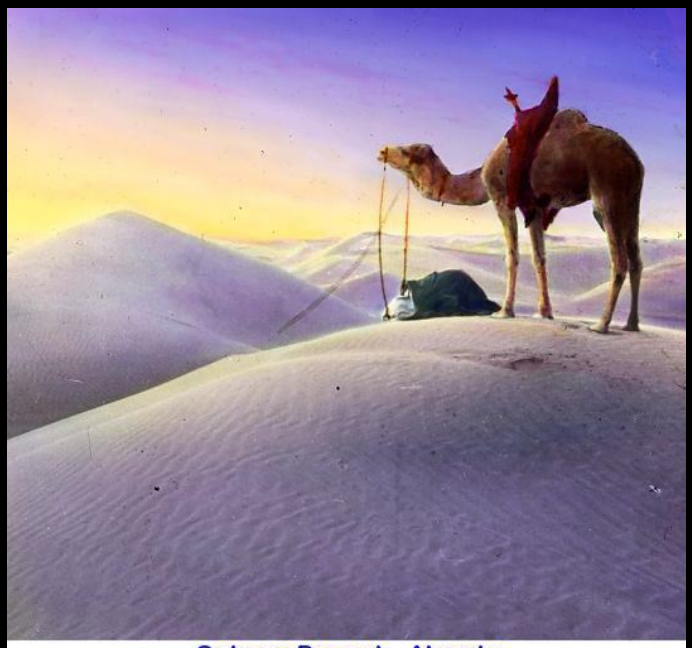
H.C. Ostrander, "How did the Ancients Move Blocks of Stones as Large as Houses," *The San Francisco Sunday Call*, January 20, 1907, p. 8.

Bundy Family Private Collection

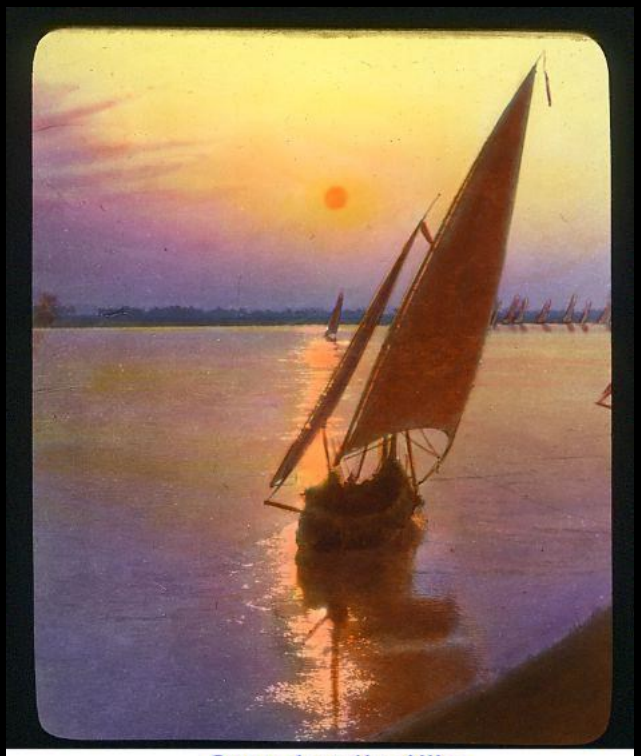
H.C. Ostrander, "The Locomotive of the Old World —the Donkey", *San Francisco Chronicle*, Sunday, July 29, 1906, p. 12.

Harry C. Ostrander, Digitized Images of Hand Painted Glass Slides, Created from Photographic Negatives of Travels in Egypt, 1901, 1911, 1917.

Harry C. Ostrander



Sahara Desert - Algeria



Sunset on the Nile

Above: Blue Mosque, Cairo, Egypt. Hand-colored lantern slide by Harry C. Ostrander

Front Cover: Pyramids at Giza, Egypt. Hand-colored lantern slide by Harry C. Ostrander